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Message Text

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15
ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01

SP-02 STR-01 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SAM-01 OMB-01 L-02 NSC-05

USIA-06 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 /093 W
---------- 048039
R 212116Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8122
INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY GENEVA

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB ICFTU MX VE
SUBJ: ICFTU SPECIAL MISSION TO LATIN AMERICA

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REF: EC BRUSSELS 2013

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1. THE ICFTU MISSION VISITED VENEZUELA MAR 16-MAR 18.
ROBERT D MACDONALD, ICFTU PRESIDENT; OTTO KERSTEN, ICFTU SECRETARY GENERAL; WIM KOK, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE DUTCH LABOR CENTRAL (NVV); RUNE MOULIN, INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE SWEDISH LABOR CENTRAL (LO); DANIEL PEDERSON, ICFTU EDUCATION DIRECTOR; MIGUEL ANGEL MARTINEZ, ICFTU LATIN AMERICAN DEPARTMENT; AND ALFONSO SANCHEZ MADARIAGA, MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MEXICAN LABOR CENTRAL (CTM) MADE UP THE DELEGATION.

2. THE ICFTU VISIT TO VENEZUELA COINCIDED WITH PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ'S STATE VISIT TO MEXICO. PEREZ WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ACTING CONFEDERATION OF VENEZUELAN WORKERS (CTV) PRESIDENT RAFAEL LEON LEON, ACTING CTV SECRETARY GENERAL AUGUSTO MALAVE VILLALBA AND CTV PRESS SECRETARY MANUAL PENALVER.
JOSE VARGAS, INTERNATIONAL SECRETATARY AND ALMOST CERTAINLY FUTURE PRESIDENT OF THE CTV WAS LEFT BEHIND TO ENTERTAIN THE VISITORS.
ICFTU REPRESENTATIVES LUNCHED WITH ACTING PRESIDENT OCTAVIO LEPAGE, THE REMNANTS OF THE CABINET, AND WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CTV AT "LA CASONA," THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICIAL RESIDENCE. SURPRISINGLY LITTLE PUBLICITY WAS GIVEN TO THE MISSION.

3. CTV SOURCES REPORT THAT SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WERE CONDUCTED WITH ACCION DEMOCRATICA (AD) STALWARTS JOSE VARGAS; HUMBERTO HERNANDEZ, LEADER OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS; AND JUAN HERRERA, LEADER OF THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS. REPORTEDLY THE EXCHANGE WAS FRANK. THE VENEZUELANS STRESSED THEIR DESIRE TO RESTRUCTURE THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE REGIONAL GROUPING OF THE ICFTU TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO THE FREE AND DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS OF THE HEMISPHERE. THE ICFTU LEADERSHIP WAS SYMPATHETIC TO THESE DESIRES. KERSTEN REPORTEDLY STRESSED THAT THE ICFTU WAS NOT INTERESTED IN AFFILIATING WITH AN ORGANIZATION WHICH EXCLUDED "NORTH AMERICA." THE VENEZUELANS REPLIED THAT BOTH THE AFL-CIO AND THE CANADIANS (CLC) SHOULD BE PART OF ANY NEW ORGANIZATION.
IT WAS AGREED THAT BETWEEN NOW AND THE ICFTU MEXICO CITY CONFERENCE IN OCT 1975 REPRESENCTIVES OF THE LABOR CENTRALS OF CANADA, MEXICO, COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA AND THE UNITED STATES (THE FIVE KEY MEMBERS OF ORIT) SHOULD MEET TO DISCUSS WHAT FORM A HEMISPHERIC LABOR ORGANIZATION SHOULD TAKE. THERE WAS A CLEAR IMPLICATION THAT THE END RESULT OF THIS PROCESS MIGHT BE A SIMPLE
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REFORM OF ORIT AND A CHANGE IN ORIT LEADERSHIP TO MORE CLOSELY REFLECT CTV VIEWS.

4. SANCHEZ WAS REPORTEDLY SENT BY THE CTM'S FIDEL VELASQUEZ TO CLARIFY THE CTV'S POSITION ON CUBA, THE U.S. TRADE REFORM LAW, AND THE CTV'S CALL FOR A MEETING ON THE TRADE LAW (CARACAS 351 AND 913). CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION HAD RESULTED FROM AN EARLIER MEXICO VISIT OF ACTING CTV PRESIDENT RAFAEL LEON LEON (A MEMBER

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OF THE OPPOSITION SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY - COPEI). SANCHEZ WAS APPARENTLY SATISFIED WITH VARGAS'S REITERATION OF THE CTV'S ANTI-COMMUNISM AND ASSURANCES THAT THE APRIL CTV CONGRESS WILL NOT BE COMBINED WITH THE ANTI-TRADE LAW MEETING OR ANY OTHER HEMISPHERIC TRADE UNION MEETING.

5. COMMENT: IF THE REPORTS RECEIVED BY THE EMBASSY FROM CTV SOURCES ARE ACCURATE, AND WE BELIEVE THEY ARE, THE ICFTU VISIT WAS MUCH LESS SIGNIFICANT THAN SOME HAD EXPECTED. THE RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL OF THE "HIGHEST-EVER" MISSION TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE ABSENCE OF MUCH OF THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF THE CTV PROBABLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE MDERATE TONE OF THE DISCUSSIONS IN CARACAS. THERE ARE ALSO CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT THE CTM'S RENEWED SUPPORT FOR ORIT SIGNALED BY PAYMENT OF BACK DUES IS HAVING A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON CTV THINKING. KERSTEN SEEMED AS EAGER AS THE VENEZUELANS TO FIND A FORMULA WHICH WOULD GUARANTEE CONTINUED PARTICIPATION OF THE CLC AND THE AFL-CIO IN A HEMISPHERE LABOR ORGANIZATION. A RESTRUCTURED ORIT WITH A VENEZUELAN GENERAL SECRETARY MIGHT SATISFY THE CTV, ALTHOUGH IN THE PAST FIRST-RANK LEADERS OF THE CTV HAVE BEEN LOATH TO ABANDON THEIR POWER BASE IN CARACAS TO MOVE TO MEXICO. THIS WOULD STILL LEAVE UNRESOLVED THE PROBLEM OF ARGENTINE (CGT) PARTICIPATION IN A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION.
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